

# DSA NEWS

Newsletter for Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)



**ROCK THE STAGE**

A live stream event showcasing the immense talents and aspirations of persons with Down syndrome.

**SATURDAY, JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
STARTS AT 8PM

**LIVE @** DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION - SINGAPORE FACEBOOK PAGE

**Featured performance by Rahimah Rahim**

**Featured performance by Gurmit Singh**

**Featured performance by Joanna Dong**

The poster features a light pink background with white geometric patterns and yellow polka dots. It includes three portrait photos of performers in individual colored frames (yellow, blue, pink) with their names below. A large play button icon is on the right, and various decorative arrows and symbols are scattered throughout.

## Centre re-opening

After two months of home-based learning, Adult Education Services are back in action at both centres.

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## Micron Gives

Micron launched a local community campaign to support DSA(S)' fundraising efforts during circuit-breaker.

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## Our Stories

Raising a child is no easy feat, Mdm Hui shares her joys, worries and anxieties with us.

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# FROM THE ED'S DESK

Dear Members,

It has been three months since our last newsletter to you. DSA(S) has been closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and we have taken a cautious approach to the resumption of our programmes and services conducted at DSA/ILT Centre when the Circuit Breaker was lifted on 1 June 2020.

Our office has resumed operations from 2 June while retaining the same circuit breaker measures. Two of our Centre-based programs namely Adult Enhancement Program (AEP) and Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre were subsequently reopened on 8 June albeit with elevated safe distancing measures where learner cohorts rotate weekly, alternating between Home Based Learning (HBL) and returning to DSA/ILT Centre for lessons.

Prior to the resumption of these two programmes at our Centres, we introduced HBL to our learners in order not to disrupt their learning routine when physical sessions had to be suspended. These HBL materials are adapted from the activity schedules planned for each group of learners and gave us the opportunity to encourage our caregivers to take a more active role in steering their child/ward's learning through technology.

While we maintain our focus on compliance with the safety measures and advisories by the Multi-Ministry Taskforce, we also have the added responsibility of raising the much needed funds to support and sustain the delivery of our services and programmes in the face of COVID-19 and the aftermath. Since the outbreak, DSA(S) has embarked on a series of fundraising campaigns and more notably, our first ever 'Rock The Stage' virtual talent show coming your way on 4 July 2020. Please support us!

We are in for the long haul but we will remain vigilant in making adjustments along the way to support all our stakeholders to the best of our ability. This, we believe, will give DSA(S) the best chance in moving forward. In the meanwhile, focus on your well-being, stay safe, protect your loved ones, and know we will do everything we can to see us through this crisis.

Thank you.

**Yeo Ando**  
Executive Director



# ITP GOES VIRTUAL



DSA(S) ITP team together with SPD's Speech & Language Therapist (bottom left)

Research has shown that infants and toddlers learn best in environments where they have secure relationships with caring and responsive adults and feel safe to freely explore and learn.

As part of our continued engagement with our Infant Toddler Programme (ITP) families during the circuit breaker period, our ITP team designed and implemented a Virtual Intervention Support (VIS) platform. VIS started on 30 March 2020 with support from SPD's Speech and Language Therapist, catering to 10 families virtually.

In addition, group chats for individual families were set up via Whatsapp, making provision for parents and caregivers to share information and updates on the family's and child's progress with the ITP team.

VIS will continue to be an integral part of our ITP support amid the current situation. We like to thank all our families for their continued support

during this period and send our best wishes to all to take care and stay safe.

*"The ITP virtual intervention arrangement is a great effort from the team. Even with the current movement restrictions, we are still able to connect with the teachers on my daughter's progress on a weekly basis. The support and advice provided during and after each virtual session are well catered to our needs. In particular, the follow-up written notes and specific intervention materials/video shared gave us ideas and clear guidance on how we, as parents and caregivers can make a difference even through our daily routines."*

– Susan

*"The virtual intervention session is useful. I am able to address my concerns and receive helpful tips and advice from the team."*

– Mdm Huda



*Students  
accessing  
learning  
materials  
through their  
digital devices*

## ONLINE LEARNING WITH IFSP

Up until a few months ago, sending our children to childcare, kindergarten and school was the usual routine. However, when the COVID-19 situation escalated, these routines were disrupted. We had to navigate through various challenges with the implementation of additional safety measures.

In order to continue providing help and support to our parents and students, IFSP teachers produced and packaged a collection of online learning materials. The online lessons, videos and resources supported students' engagement and helped them to practise skills previously taught. Even difficult Math skills can be explained in the form of stories, breaking down complex concepts into engaging explanations that the students can better understand.

This circuit breaker period has changed how students are educated. We are no longer confined to physical classrooms for learning to take place. This pandemic has also opened our eyes to the plethora of online learning resources that our students can continue to access and utilise in their learning journeys. This growing partnership with e-learning solutions has unlocked new opportunities for our students, the IFSP team and DSA(S).



# AES TAKES ON HBL

Prior to circuit breaker, lessons for our adult learners were all held in physical spaces at DSA Centre and ILT Centre. When physical sessions had to be suspended, home-based learning (HBL) was introduced to minimise disruptions to their learning routine.

Transiting to the virtual world was a whole new dimension for our training officers, but nonetheless an enriching experience for all. The newly developed HBL materials adapted from the planned activity schedules for each group were introduced and lessons with the learners were conducted virtually thrice a week.

Despite being connected and learning through computers, learners looked forward to these online sessions where they are able to meet and interact virtually with their friends. Their enthusiasm were contagious and the screens were often filled with their smiles and laughter. Over time, the training officers honed their virtual teaching skills and were able to better engage the learners during lessons.

More importantly, caregivers also took on a more active role in their child's learning journey. By spending quality time with their child at home, it helped to strengthen their family bonds.



Cooking and baking modules were also introduced to our learners to practise at their homes under the guidance of their caregivers. It was certainly an engaging effort between the training officers and caregivers to create enjoyable, impactful and meaning lessons for our learners.

*“Being able to see the learners’ faces kept us motivated to teach. Their enthusiasm is contagious.*

– TO Todd

*There were countless times where I felt so glad that our learners were taking the online instructions with much gusto. They’d look forward to attending the online HBL lessons with the trainers. This was definitely a key indicator that they enjoy learning through the means of technology.*

– TO Shuhada

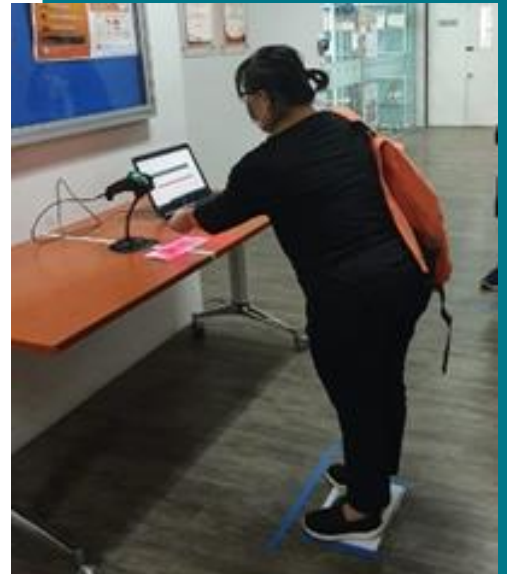
# CENTRE RE-OPENING: POST CIRCUIT BREAKER

After two months of home-based learning (HBL), DSA Centre and ILT Centre re-opened this month in a subdued, yet much anticipated manner. Both learners and staff from the Adult Enhancement Programme (AEP) and the Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre were eager to reunite after the circuit breaker was lifted.

Precautionary measures were implemented to ensure a safe learning environment for our learners. Two groups of learners and training officers rotate each week, alternating between HBL and returning to the centres for lessons.

Safe distancing is now the “new norm”. Learners at the centres will have to abide by the new safe distancing measures to ensure the well-being of everyone. Our learners are taking all these changes in their stride by wearing masks throughout the day, washing their hands more frequently and keeping social distancing from one another as a precautionary measure.

Despite all these measures that some may find inconvenient, the resilience and adaptability of the learners shone through. Our learners are just as enthusiastic as before. So we let their passionate attitudes become a beacon of light in this period of uncertainty.



Learners having their particulars and temperatures taken before entering the Centre

## FSS X ArtSE!



Thanks to digital technology, everyone was able to meaningfully engage with one another.

FSS recently partnered with ArtSE! to organise online workshops for our members and their families to promote mental wellness and family bonding. Through this series of Caregiver + PWD Engagement workshops, FSS aims to strengthen family bonds and improve members' motor-skills in a fun and meaningful manner.

Customised workshop kits were prepared and delivered to our families prior to the sessions. To ensure their well-being, all the kits were properly sanitised before delivery.

# RESOURCE LIBRARY GOES DIGITAL

DSA(S) has an enduring collaborative relationship with the National Library Board (NLB) in projects like KidsRead. Thus, to have our FSS embark on another exciting project with them is something we look forward to.

Last August, NLB Assistant Chief Executive Ms Catherine Lau and NLB officers visited DSA Centre to lend their expertise in digitalising our resource library located at the Parent's Lounge. Their feasibility survey concluded that NLB's e-library platform was a suitable platform for DSA (S) to enhance its engagement with members and their caregivers.

With the new system in place, our caregivers and members will be able to easily access NLB's resources from the comfort of the centre. All they need to do is to do a search for the books using

the standalone desktop and scan the QR code alongside the book title to access these materials and resources by NLB digitally.

The following categories of books would soon be available in the e-library:

- I. Mental health and well-being
- II. Employment
- III. Travel
- IV. Educational
- V. Disability
- VI. Leisure and recreation

This complimentary digital service will be hosted and maintained by NLB. Please keep a look out for this new initiative which will bring a new chapter to our FSS resource library.

## 'OUR LIVES, OUR VOICES': ZOOM EDITION



In May, 'Our Lives, Our Voices' (OLOV) began conducting self-advocacy sessions via Zoom. It was a first for staff, self-advocates and volunteers alike. A brand new learning experience for all so that everybody can interact together using this online platform.

Upon seeing each other on the screen, many broke into laughter and waved excitedly to their peers. The smiles on everyone's faces was a stark

reminder of the importance of a community and the significance of social interaction for each individual.

Looking ahead, this may be the new norm for things to come and we have to learn to transcend physical boundaries to enable everyone to communicate and interact just as productively over the digital space

# ZUMBA PARTY



With the circuit-breaker measure in place, DSA (S) faced much disruptions to all of our programmes, services and fundraising activities. However, this did not deter our members and their families from bonding with our volunteers and corporate partners.

Over two Saturdays in May, some 70 individuals donned their active gear and gathered online for virtual Zumba sessions with Ms Pansy Lau, a licensed instructor who has been conducting Zumba classes for our members at DSA (S) for the last couple of years.

During the first session on Saturday, 2 May, the Zoom meeting room was filled with many beaming faces and enthusiastic waves. Being separated physically certainly did not dampen their spirits. It took a while for everyone to send across their greetings before Ms Pansy could finally begin the Zumba session.

It was such a joy jiving and staying active together. Being able to interact with one another while keeping fit in the comfort of our homes brought much fun, laughter and sweat for everyone. As we adapt to the new norm of hosting activities online, we look forward to seeing you all again at our next virtual event!

# HERITAGECARES @HOME

Our members and caregivers had a crafty treat as part of 'HeritageCares@Home' - a pilot initiative by the National Heritage Board. The series of experiential art therapy workshop was conducted online by art therapist, Loh Wan Ting from Red Balloon Therapy.

The workshop explored the theme 'Traditional Trades' where members learned about professions from the yesteryears such as the Handcrafted Goldsmith, Movie Poster Painter and Coffee Roasters. They unleashed their creativity by working on art pieces relating to the trade such as creating symbols to represent themselves (Handcrafted Goldsmith), using foam board and ink printing to create a story board (Movie Poster Painter) and dabbling in coffee painting art (Coffee Roasters).

Art therapist Wan Ting shared that "it was wonderful to observe caregivers and members taking turns to co-create an artwork that encapsulate the stories, thoughts and emotions each member had shared and bonded over the experience. "

Thank you National Heritage Board and Red Balloon Therapy for bringing Arts to our members' home during this stay home period!





# Micron® GIVES

With circuit-breaker measures in place, our key fundraising events had to be suspended which inevitably disrupted our fundraising efforts. Much to our relief, Micron quickly sprung into action and set up a local community campaign via Benevity which helped DSA(S) raised over \$50k to date.

These funds will help sustain the running of our various programmes and services for our beneficiaries and their families.

*"As local organisations continue to be overwhelmed by needs that outpace what they can provide, Micron remains committed to doing all that we can to alleviate the impact of this pandemic in Singapore and ensure equal access to support organisations and families in need."*

- Mr Kok Sing, Country Manager

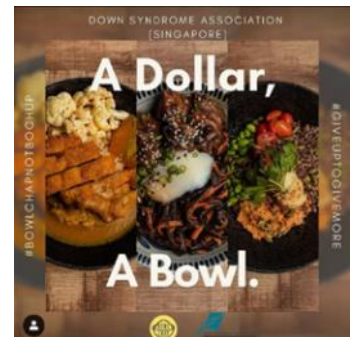
A big thank you to all the staff at Micron for your supporting during this unprecedented crisis.

In support of our campaign-Give It Up, our friends from Bowl Chap pledged to donate \$1 for every bowl sold in June.

Bowl Chap shares *"it has been our mission to create a positive impact in our society. We aim to use our food as a vehicle for people to forge deeper connections with each other over meals. DSA(S) has been one of our partner organisation since our inception and we feel that it is only right of us to pass on this blessing we have received to empower more beneficiaries. It is imperative that we take the first step and keep paying it forward."*

Special thanks to everyone for lending a helping hand in this time of need to support our community. A total of \$1,100 was raised!

## GIVE IT UP



## UPCAKES



Aaron and Elaine, founders of Upcakes, dedicated a portion of their revenue from their Father's Day campaign to DSA(S) as their way of giving back to the community. They felt incredibly blessed for having and thus recognise the importance of sharing what they have.

Upcakes, coined for their child Andrew who was born with Down syndrome. According to Aaron, "Up is a contrast to being Down", which is why they run Upcakes as a "business of giving and uplifting people".

A total of \$920 was raised and donated to DSA(S). Thank you Upcakes, for your staunch support!

# PROJECT BLOOM



Article contributed by:  
Megan, Project Director

Hello! I'm Megan, the Project Director of Project Bloom 19/20! It's nice to meet all of you.

If you've attended our sessions before, I hope you (and your child!) have had a great time – our volunteers certainly enjoyed meeting your children and engaging them one-on-one (or even two-on-one).

For each of my volunteers, it has been a meaningful journey. I'm thankful that both sides have put in the effort to try to understand and open up to each other. Trying to connect with strangers might be nerve-wrecking, but there's so much potential for awareness and mutual understanding if you take that first step.

At the heart of it, that's what Project Bloom is here for – we want to help individuals bloom and grow beyond their labels, beyond their worldview. And we hope that we help the community bloom too – to show that despite the social stigma, there's still so much capacity

for beauty and happiness.

Due to the global pandemic, for the health and safety of your children and our volunteers, the remaining of our activities had to be postponed. It's a pity. In our mid-journey reflections, many of my volunteers have expressed their disappointment and emphasised how much they've learned from you and your children – from adapting to the unexpected to learning to appreciate the little things in life. We hope to continue our journey with you – we miss you, and we really, really hope to see you guys soon.

The organising committee still has so much planned and so much more to offer. So while we're waiting for the situation to turn for the better, we're looking to alternatives as well! You can be sure that we're going to do our best to deliver.

Lastly, our volunteers would love to share some of their experiences with you:

*"Through the beneficiary engagement sessions and main event, I have learnt about the importance of reliability. It is very easy to carry out an activity in the ways that we are accustomed to, but my interactions with the beneficiaries have taught me the significance of looking at the world through their lenses instead of my own."* – Tricia Wong Kay Mun

*"Interacting with the caregivers (at Beach Day) changed my perspective. Understanding how they have wholeheartedly supported their child warms my heart. They are such important motivators, even in the smaller aspects."* – Yunice Kah Meiyong



SMU volunteer working on a craft project with one of DSA(S) member

# PROJECT CARBO-DY-HYDRATES

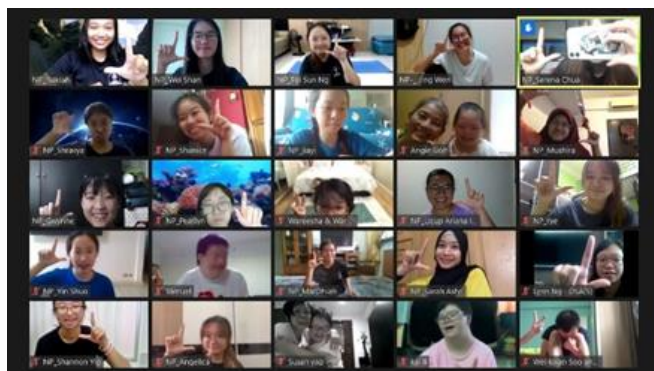
Article contributed by:

Tan Wei Shan, Ngee Ann Polytechnic Leo Club

Project Carbo-dy-hydrates is an online event organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic Leo Club and Yoga Club for student volunteers and beneficiaries to engage in different types of physical activities during circuit-breaker.

The session promotes physical workouts that are filled with fun, joy and happiness during circuit-breaker. After the session, many of our student volunteers requested for another round of Yoga

session as they felt the time spent was too short to know one another better. Overall, it was an engaging session with all the beneficiaries!



## OUR STORIES



Raising a child is no easy feat. It takes a lot of commitment, both emotionally and physically to care for a child, more so for a child with Down syndrome.

According to Mdm Hui, mother of Zhuo Ying, raising her daughter has been a journey of pleasant surprises. She recounts her worries about Zhuo Ying's lack of independence, but now she's glad that Zhuo Ying has been gaining independence. Mdm Hui credits Zhuo Ying's

achievements to the robust support system from her family. Zhuo Ying even shared that she has plans to work after completing her studies to help her family.

Mdm Hui encourages all to "give them time. Accept them for who they are and don't limit them. Give them the chance to learn and of course, be patient."

Zhuo Ying's story sheds light on what it means by the proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Today, thanks to her loving family and a supportive community, we get to celebrate Zhuo Ying's milestone of pursuing a tertiary education at Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College West.

If you'd like to learn more about Zhuo Ying's story, please scan the QR code to access the article.

Special thanks to Mothership for this feature.



Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from all of us at Down Syndrome Association (Singapore).

Your support will enable us to support our children and adults with Down syndrome through various educational, developmental and social programmes with the aim to assist them to become more independent and lead productive lives.

Whether in big or small ways, we hope that you will continue to support our Cause. If you wish to make a contribution, kindly complete the donation form below and return it to us via post or at DSA Centre.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks and appreciation from the Board of Management of DSA(S), staff and our community of persons with Down syndrome!

### **DONATION FORM** (NEWS/2020/06)

Name [as per NRIC/FIN/Registered Company]: (MR/MS/MDM/DR)

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact no: \_\_\_\_\_ NRIC/FIN/UEN/: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a contribution of:

A donation of \$ 50 / 100 / 500 / 1,000 / Others: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **By Cheque:**

Made payable to Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

Cheque No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **By Credit Card:**

One-time  Monthly Contribution

Visa/Mastercard Credit card no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **All outright donations are entitled to a tax deduction of 2.5 times**

Kindly drop off this form together with your contribution at our reception counter or mail to DSA Centre, attention to "Team CPCC".



Scan to Donate



TO BE THE CENTRE OF  
EXCELLENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS  
WITH DOWN SYNDROME,  
THEIR FAMILIES  
AND THEIR COMMUNITY.



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